Visa-on-Arrival to Indians by Sri Lanka

5320. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a decision to unilaterally give Indian passport holders visa-on-arrival in the Island is likely to be announced by the Sri Lankan Government;

(b) if so, whether Sri Lankan is issuing visas on arrival even without insisting on reciprocity on India's part;

(c) whether Sri Lanka has pointed out that India should have no objection to Sri Lankan's unilateral action as India is bent on improving trade and investment relations with Sri Lanka; and

(d) if so, to what extent India has welcomed this move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) Government of Sri Lanka in January, 2002 announced that any person who is a bonafide tourist and who is a citizen of India shall be exempt from the requirement of possessing a visa for entry into and stay in Sri Lanka for a period not exceeding one month if such person is in possession of a valid passport and where so required by the law of the country to which he is ultimately bound, a visa authorising his entry into that country. This is a unilateral decision by the Government of Sri Lanka. All Sri Lankan nationals visiting India must have appropriate visas stamped on their passports before arrival in India.

Assistance for agricultural institutions in Afghanistan

5321. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to assist Afghanistan on rebuilding the agricultural institutions damaged seriously;

(b) if so, the assistance proposed; and

(c) the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) During the visit of H.E. Hamid Karzai, Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration to India on 26-27 February 2002, many areas were identified for bilateral cooperation, including proposals for assistance in the field of Agriculture. Through subsequent technical discussions, including during the visit of Afghan Minister of Agriculture Mr. Seyyed Hussein Anwari in April this year, steps have been taken to provide assistance, *inter alia,* through supply of seeds, equipment and training of personnel.

Indo-US talks regarding reconstruction work in Afghanistan

5322. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and the U.S. have held talks to coordinate reconstruction work in Afghanistan and enhance stability in that country;

(b) whether both the countries have agreed to train Afghanistan Military and police;

(c) the number of Indian personnel to be sent to impart training in Afghanistan; and

(d) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) As part of our efforts to assist Afghanistan, India has actively participated in various international efforts aimed at reconstruction and rebuilding Afghanistan, India has also been in bilateral dialogue with several countries, including the US, that have interests in Afghanistan, to discuss aspects relating to institution building of the Afghan Interim Administration in various fields, including in the field of Defence.

America's reported statement to use nuclear weapons

5323. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report published in the Indian Express dated March 13, 2002, captioned "N-report casts PALL on US-Russia ties"; and